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1827





THE
BATTLE OF CLONTARF:

A
DESCRIPTIVE POEM;

✓
BY JOHN MCCARRAN, OF LONDONDERRY, ESQ.

WITH

HISTORICAL NOTES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF SOME OF THE SPLENDID EVENTS THAT MARKED
SUCH REFULGENT LUSTRE ON THE REIGN OF
BRIAN BORU, KING OF IRELAND;

BY GEORGE PEPPER OF NEW YORK.

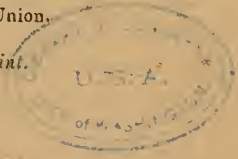
Let Erin remember the days of old
Ere faithless sons betrayed her;
When Kennedy wore the collar of gold,
Which he won from the proud invader:
When her King, with standard of green unfurled,
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger
Ere the Emerald gem of the Western World
Was set in the crown of a stranger.

New-York:

Printed and Published, and to be had of the several Booksellers
throughout the Union.

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Southern District of New York, ss.

BE it remembered, that on the 17th day of May, A. D. 1827, in the 51st year of the Independence of the United States of America, Daniel Timony, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit: The Battle of Clontarf; a Descriptive Poem: by John McCarran, Esq. of Londonderry: with Historical Notes illustrative of some of the splendid events that have shed such refulgent lustre on the reign of Brian Boroihme, King of Ireland: By George Pepper, of N. York.

Let Erin remember the days of old
Ere faithless sons betray'd her;
When Kennedy wore the collar of gold,
Which he won from the proud invader:
When her King with standard of green unfurl'd,
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger
Ere the Emerald green of the Western World
Was set in the crown of a Stranger.

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "An Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

June 1,

FRED. J. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New York.

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INTRODUCTION.

AN ardent and enthusiastic love of country is an inherent characteristic of the Irish people.—No matter in what clime an Irishman may be cast by destiny,—no matter whether he loiters in the floral bowers of prosperity, or struggles, like Sisyphus, in the unavailing effort of rolling the stone of poverty against the mountain of adverse fortune, still the compass of his recollection continually points to his native land,—his own dear Ireland!—the illumined polar star to which his fondest wishes turn with all the prejudice of national feeling, and patriotic affection. He is often compelled by ruthless oppression and vindictive persecution to tear himself from the arms of connubial love, paternal affection, and the sacred ties of friendship; to abandon the home of his fathers, and go in search of that bread, which the task-masters of his country deny him; but under any circumstance, he can never forget the dear scenes of his youth, the happy days of other times, when the flowery landscape of life was seen decked in prismatic hues, and illuminated by the brilliant rainbow of anticipated delights!—Whether enslaved in the east, or free in the west, the pastoral

INTRODUCTION.

valley—the babbling rivulet—the moss clad ruins of the mouldering abbey, in which

“Many a saint, and many a hero trod;”

the grove-sheltered cottage, where he first awoke from the tranquil slumbers of existence, and the green hills of his school-boy amusements—with all the soft and endearing associations which they awaken, never cease to warm his imagination, nor, to his latest hour, do they depart from his memory. The patriotic and elegant productions of LADY MORGAN often soothe the sorrows of his exile, while viewing the pristine glories of his country, in her splendid pages; and the sublime and enrapturing strains of Moore, like the melody of seraphs' lyres, thrill his soul with the remembrance of home, and communicate to his heart the electric spark that kindles the tenderest, and most delightful sympathies, which can irradiate the gloom of regret.

After the publication of my remarks in the NATIONAL ADVOCATE, under the signature of FINGAL, on the derisive, and burlesque melo-drama of BRIAN BOROHME, (lately exhibited at the Chatham Theatre in an insulting manner, more calculated to give hilarity to the midnight orgies of *Bacchanalians* than to contribute to the intellectual amusement of an intelligent Irish audience,) the following Poem was presented to me, with a request that I would, in addition to my former comments on the splendid reign of the illustrious Brian, illustrate the description of the BATTLE of CLONTARF with historical notes that should wipe away the stigma, which the manager of the CHATHAM THEATRE attempted to fasten on the me-

mory of the greatest monarch that ever sat on the Irish throne. To malign, distort, and misrepresent the Irish character have been, since the invasion of Henry II., the alpha and omega of English prejudice. We, who sent forth Teachers in the sixth century to enlighten the darkness of Europe*—to diffuse the blessings of religion in Scotland, and to tame its savage Picts by the discipline of civilization and instruction; we, who carried the terror of our arms, under a FINGAL, a CONN, and an O'NIALL, to the extremities of Europe;—we, who defied the Roman power in the zenith of its glory;† we, who produced Usher, Swift, Boyle, Goldsmith, Sterne, Grattan, Sheridan, Curran, and Burke;

* “So much fame did the School of Armagh and Clonard acquire, that the Kings of France, Spain, and Denmark, sent their children to them for instruction. In the School of Clonard in the year 525 there were three thousand students.”—*Colgan's Annals of Ireland*.

“The great Charlemagne was educated by an Irish Teacher.”—*Hanmer's Chronicle*.

† Agricola when Governor of Britain wrote a letter to Cormack King of Ireland, demanding of him to make submission and pay tribute to the Roman Government, which so incensed the Irish Monarch that he sent a message of defiance to the Roman General; and ordered a large body of troops to go with the utmost speed to the assistance of the Picts, who were then harrassed by the Roman legions. The expedition was commanded by the King's brother, a Prince of skill and bravery, who fiercely attacked the Romans, and made a successful incursion into South Britain, took several captives and returned home with an immense acquisition of spoil and trophies.—Tacitus, whose authority must be acknowledged irrefragible, says, that the ports of Ireland were better known from commerce, through commercial men, than those of Britain.

“That Ireland was well known to the ancients is proved by

and we that can now boast of having a MOORE, LADY MORGAN, Miss Edgworth, Mr. Plunkett, Judge Bush, MR. O'CONNELL, and the eloquent Sheil,* to be set

the best authorities.—Dionysius in his Geography mentions *Ierne* as a country famous for its immense woods of Oak, Ptolemy says the same. Apuleius, in his Book *De Mundo*, on the authority, as he says, of Aristotle; and Theophrastus speaks of it as a country of rich soil and temperate climate. Polybius has made several allusions in his writings to *Ibernea*. Strabo stated that Ireland was a cold country. Plutarch said the Irish were of Celtic origin.”—*Irish Antiquarian Researches*, Dublin, 1826.

* Although English dominion, like the deadly Upas Tree, blasted the germinating buds of Irish talent; although its intolerance was employed to arm passion and prejudice against the country. “In spite of these and many other obstacles, the moral strength of Ireland, a nation always distinguished for the natural endowments of its population, rose superior to the cruel pressure of its political inflictions; and the domestic activity and intellectual improvement of the people—slow and limited as they appear, when compared with the advances of the sister kingdom—proceeded with a rapidity little short of miraculous, under so stultifying a system of legislation and government. It was then (1800) that the light of national genius concentrated its long scattered rays to a point, and shining steadily from its proper focus, threw out those inextinguishable sparks of moral lustre—

————— “Which are wont to give
Light to a world, and make a nation live.”—

It was then that the powerful collision of active, ardent and energetic minds produced that brilliant burst of talent, which, for something more than a century, flung over the political darkness of the land, a splendour to which her struggles and her misfortunes served only to give a stronger relief, and a more resplendent effect. For the last century England had a running account with Ireland, for dramatic contributions when her own resources had, by being too largely drawn upon, near

up as targets for the poisoned arrows of calumny and defamation, is an act of cruel and aggressive injustice, for which England must some day or other, suffer on the burning altars of retributive EXPIATION!

Some of the illiberal and unlettered Editors of this City, borrowing their impressions from the intolerant London newspapers, often indulge in silly tirades against the Irish character, who, while they so quickly descry the mote in our eyes, are insensible of the beam in their own. The Americans are in the habit of making, what have been called, *Bulls* as well as the Irish; and any reader of discernment may find as ludicrous blunders in the *Commercial Advertiser*, and in the *N.Y. American*, as any that can be selected from Miss Edgeworth's Collection. Let me enumerate a few of the prominent *Bulls* of *New-York*—viz. For instance, "*The Marble Manufacturing Company*;" (*what a felicitous idea!*) "*Quill Manufactory*;" "*Blind Factory*;" "*Cash Store*." In John-street the following notice was exhibited in a window a few days ago—"This house and store will be removed over the way, on the first of May;" and on the Sign board of a Teacher in Cherry-street, is painted—"Book-keeping taught here by Grammar!" While on this subject I will quote the opinion of a literary traveller of great eminence, who lately visited Ireland.—"The

ly become bankrupt.—Ireland produced almost all the best dramatic writers on the British stage: Congreve, Howard, Souther, Steele, Farquahr, Phillips, Kelly, Jones, Orrery, Tate, Concanen, Dobbs, Bickerstaff, Brook, Centlivre, Griffiths, Jepson, Murphy, Macklin, West, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Sheil, Maturin, &c. &c."—*Vide Lady Morgan's Absenteeism*.

native Irishman," says he, "commits no more blunders than his neighbours, when he speaks in the language which he perfectly understands. His humour, however, in any language, is always inexhaustible, and his errors are never the errors of the heart. The Irish is so very idiomatic, and possesses so little in common with the other languages of modern Europe, except the Celtic, and at the same time so very figurative, that it is difficult for any one who *thinks in it* not to make *Bulls*. It is partly on this account that an unlettered Irishman speaks in glowing and metaphorical diction. It is impossible for him to separate the language of his early years from his habits of thinking; he, therefore, very naturally accommodates the acquired tongue to the idiomatic construction and phraseology of his own, and imperceptibly enriches it with all the tropes and figures with which his mind is familiar. Besides, the Irish have an ardour of mind, an enthusiasm and impetuosity, which hurry them along, and produce that confusion of ideas in which *bulls* chiefly consist."

The ancient history of Ireland, like that of many other countries, is involved in the dark mists of fabulous obscurity, and I fear that no new lights can ever dawn that will dispel the impenetrable gloom of oblivion that shrouds it. For our Manuscripts have been carried off by the Danes, and St. Patrick, in his zeal to annihilate every memorial of paganism, caused all the Druidical Books to be committed to the flames. Our claims to very remote antiquity, are, however, founded on the immovable basis of historical proofs. Ware, Boate, and the Scottish historian, Buchannan,

concur in the opinion that Ireland was first inhabited by the descendants of Japhet, about three centuries after the flood. According to their authority *Partholanus*, the grand son of Gomer, having collected a fleet, resolved on setting out on an expedition of discovery, and after a protracted voyage succeeded in landing on the western coast of the Island, on the 14th of May, with one hundred soldiers, and a great number of Greek women. But it is said that about three hundred years after the country was thus colonized all the inhabitants were swept away by a dreadful plague, which utterly destroyed every human being on the Island. Shortly after this catastrophe another colony arrived from the east, under the direction of NEMEDIUS, a man renowned for courage and military genius. He was elected King by his followers and the country flourished under his sway. He was daring and ambitious, and he engaged in an unsuccessful war with some African pirates, the result of which proved disastrous to him and his subjects; for the pirates, having a large naval force, found no difficulty in subjugating the whole Island under the yoke of their despotism. The tyranny of the victors was so cruel and insupportable, that the Irish were happy when they obtained permission to leave the country. Camden states that they embarked on board a fleet of 1130 ships at Waterford, under the command of the three grandsons of NEMEDIUS, and sailed for Greece. After a lapse of 200 years the descendants of Nemedius returned from Greece to Ireland. They were conducted by five Princes of eminent reputation, and no sooner had they landed than they commenced hostilities, and gained so many brilliant victories that the

inhabitants recognized them as sovereigns, and the Island was divided into five kingdoms for them. The subjects of these Kings were called *Firbolgs*. The *Firbolgs* were, according to historical assertion, very active, learned and valiant men ; and have left in the mounts and round towers of Ireland lasting monuments of their skill in military architecture. The *Firbolgs* were in process of time expelled, or finally subdued by the *Tuath de Dennans*, a warlike nation of Necromancers, who came from Attica and Boetia. As soon as they were landed they burned all their shipping to intimate to the natives the resolution they had formed of never again returning to the country of their birth. The learned biographer of poor Dermody (Dr. Raymond) has written several ingenious essays in support of the opinion, that the Druidical order was first established in Ireland by this Phœnician colony. Mr. Lhuyd, the celebrated Welsh Antiquarian, has brought strong historical testimony to sustain the conjecture. The *Tuath de Dennans* were so completely versed in the art of magic, it is said, that they could even restore the dead to life, and by waving their necromantic wands, they could raise fully armed those warriors who had fallen in battle the day before. They had many curiosities which possessed the power of enchantment. These were a sword, a spear, a cauldron, and the celebrated marble chair, or “ *stone of destiny*,” on which the kings of Ireland and afterwards those of Scotland, were crowned.* But neither their witchery nor magic spells

* This extraordinary stone which possessed such miraculous powers, was brought by the *Tuath de Dennon* colony from Greece. It was called *Lia Fial*, from which Ireland derived

were able to preserve the dominion of those Necromancers in Ireland, when it was invaded by the Gadelians.

The next descent was made on Ireland by the Gadelians, who were the descendants of a noble race of heroes who figured in Egypt, and spread the fame of their military exploits over the world. Their chief, Gathelus, was a man of great reputation in Egypt, and was, it is said, intimately acquainted with Moses the Jewish Legislator. His mother was Scots, the daughter of Pharoah, by *Nyul* the son of a Scythian Monarch, contemporary with Nimrod.

the name of *Innis Fail*. All the monarchs of Ireland, from the time of *Lughnadh* of the *Tuath de Dinnan* race, A. M. 2765 to the reign of *Muircartagh*, the son of *Earca*, A. D. 513 were solemnly inaugurated on the *Lia Fail*, which, until that period, was kept with great care at the Royal Palace of Tara, the chief seat of the Irish Kings. *Fergus*, the brother of *Muircartagh*, being called to the throne of *Alba*, as Scotland was then named, "procured from his brother the loan of the *Lia Fail*, that on it he might, with greater shew of religious solemnity, be inaugurated King of his new possessions. The stone was never returned to Ireland, but remained in Scotland until Edward I. of England, invaded that country, A. D. 1296, and carried off with him into his kingdom the Scottish Regalia, among which was the sacred stone of Destiny. From that period to the present day it has remained in England, and since the reign of James I. has continued to serve the purpose for which it was so long used in Ireland and Scotland; the kings of England from his time down to the present sovereign, George IV. having been crowned on it. There was a prophesy relating to this stone, that wherever the *Lia Fail* should be preserved there a Prince of Scottish, that is, Irish race, should reign. Another wonderful quality ascribed to this stone was, that when a Prince was to be inaugurated upon it, if it was the will of Heaven he should reign, the stone emitted a sound; but on the

The Gadelians, called also *Scots*, from queen *Scota*, landed in Ireland, according to Whitaker and O'Connor, about 1300 B. C. under the command of Heber and Heremon, two sons of MILESIVS, king of Spain, from whom were descended all the kings of Ireland down to the English conquest.* HEBER and HEREMON collected all their forces and attacked the Danes with great fury and impetuosity, and gained a signal victory over them. The conflict, it appears by O'Halloran, took place at Tralee on the 17th day of the month Bel, or May, in the year of the World, according to the Hebrew computation, 2735. The loss of the Milesians consisted of three hundred souls, among whom were two venerable Druids, who stimu-

contrary it was silent if the candidate for the sovereignty was rejected. It emitted a sound under every King that mounted the throne of Ireland from the time of *Lughaighd*, Long hand, to the birth of Christ, but it never afterwards emitted a sound under any King. For the Demon that resided in it became dumb, and every idol lost its power at the time of that illustrious birth which was born of the blessed Virgin Mary.—*Vide, the letter of Mr. E. O'Rielly, Secretary to the Ibero Celtic Society, and author of the Irish Dictionary, to Sir William Beltham author of Irish Antiquarian Researches. Vol. I. Page 33.*

Ware, Keating, and Warner, concur in attributing oracular Virtues to this stone. It is now in Westminster Abbey.—Some historians stated that it was part of Jacob's Pillar. "It must be owned," says Warner, "that the coronation of the Kings of Great Britain upon this stone seems to confirm its title of the "*Stone of Destiny*."

* *Milesians* signify in the native Irish, *Clana Miledh*, or the posterity of the Hero. Milesius was distinguished by the patronymic appellation of *Miledh Espaine*, or the champion of Spain.

lated their courage and buoyed up their sinking hopes by constantly assuring them that the intervention of divine power would make the victory certain.* This victory gave a death-blow to the dominion of the Danaans in Ireland. The Milesian Princes having no enemy to contend with, began to divide the country between them, and to devise institutions for its government and cultivation. Heber and Heremon agreed to leave the regulations of the division to their brother Amergin, who was appointed high-priest and law-giver. To Heber, the eldest son, was assigned the southern part of the kingdom, while the northern fell to the lot of Heremon. Both parties were satisfied with the equitable distribution of the partition. The Princes lost no time in erecting palaces worthy of their rank and dignity. Heremon raised a magnificent palace in the county of Meath, which he called, in honour of his queen, Temor, or Tara, as it was afterwards designated by succeeding monarchs. The two royal brothers seemed to cherish the most ardent disposition of friendship towards each other; but a dispute arose, like a sudden tempest, that threatened to disturb the existing harmony. The contest was owing to the desire which Heber evinced of possessing a great Poet, and a matchless musician, who came with the expedition from Spain. These men were unrivalled in their respective arts, so that each brother was determined

* Two princesses lost their lives in the battle; *Scota*, the widow of Milesius, and *Fais*, the wife of Un. They were buried with great funeral pomp at Glen Scota, near Tralee, where a superb monument was erected to their memories.

to retain them. However, the chief Druid was appointed by both parties as an arbitrator, from whose wise decision none dare swerve.

He cast lots, by which the Poet fell to the share of Hieremon, and the musician to Heber. In subsequent times the Bards, in consequence of this division, said that the south of Ireland produced the best musicians and the north the most brilliant poets.* The two brothers seemed to vie with each other in cultivating

* Ireland was known in the East by the name of the "Sacred or Hyperborean Island," and much boasted of by the Priests and Poets of Apollo, or the Sun, many ages before the planting of Christianity, which probably could hardly arise from any other circumstance, than the island being sacred to the "God of the silver bow," and greatly honouring that order, which comprehended in its sub-divisions their priests, philosophers, poets, and musicians. The Druids, or ancient Chaldees, came first to Ireland from the East, and were influenced to take up their abode in a country watered and wooded like Eden, and affording sacred groves for their mysteries, by the same reasons that determined the choice of the Phœnicians—climate and rich soil."—See *Vindication of the Irish Nation*, Dublin, 1802. "The Irish," says, that apostate reviler of his country (Giraldus Cambrensis) "carried the art of music to Italian perfection."—*Vide Ryan's Irish Worthies*. All literary foreigners have borne testimony to the pathos and melody of the Irish language, which is peculiarly adapted to give expression to love and pity. "'Tis scarcely possible," says the accomplished Miss Brooks, "that any language can be more adapted to lyric poetry, than the Irish; so great is the harmony and smoothness of its numbers; it is also possessed of a refined delicacy, a descriptive power, an exquisite tender simplicity of expression; two or three little artless words, or perhaps a single epithet will sometimes convey such an image of sentiment or suffering to the mind, that one lays down the book to look at the glowing picture."

the fine arts, in improving the soil by agriculture, and in meliorating the moral and physical condition of their subjects. Happiness and tranquillity diffused their beneficent attributes over the land; but this serene juncture of repose was like the hâlecyon calm that precedes the bursting of a volcano. It was a meteor-flash that gleamed for a moment, and then set in the dark clouds of discord, which at that period spread such a sombre gloom over the Irish horizon. The ties that closely bound the two princes together in the bonds of friendship were severed by the power of that influence which proved too formidable for the philosophy of Socrates, the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Sampson, and the ambition of Napoleon—the potent and fascinating influence of *Woman*. Yes, it was woman that first conjured up the demons of civil war and intestine dissension in Ireland. The wife of Heremon was highly accomplished, and delighted in decorating the gardens and pleasure-grounds of her palace with every embellishment of art that could give a charm to the beauties of nature. Her domains were ornamented by extensive vistas, verdant bowers, and meandering streams, so that they looked like the blooming vallies of Tempe when inhabited by the gods. The queen of Heber sighed for the possession of these romantic vales, and entreated her husband to solicit them from his brother. The request was so unreasonable, that it was indignantly refused; but so anxious and covetous was the lady to have the property of her sister, that she persuaded her husband to take possession of it by force of arms

The queen of Heremon, being a woman of lofty spirit, regarded the demand as an insult, so that she instigated her spouse to insist upon his title, and defend his right. The high-priest endeavoured to accomodate this unhappy difference, but in vain, for both ladies were obstinately determined—the one to demand and the other to refuse. A compromise could not be effected even by the influential mediation of the Druids ; and so implacable was the resentment of both parties, that a *civil* war became inevitable.

Both Princes marshalled their armies with the greatest expedition, and coming to an engagement on the plains of *Geisol*, they encountered each other with desperate valour and rage ; the conflict was terribly sanguinary and obstinate, but after a heroic struggle, victory justly declared itself in favour of Heremon. The forces of Heber were annihilated in this battle, in which the aggressor lost his life and crown.

In the preceding pages I have given an epitomised view of some interesting historical events, which I shall close by a few desultory remarks on the mission of Saint Patrick to Ireland, and on the glorious reign of Brian Boroihme.

In the year of our Lord 379, the great *Niall*, of the Heremonian Dynasty, mounted the Irish throne.*

* This monarch, whose splendid exploits shed such a blaze of glory on the page of our history, was distinguished by the name of *NIALL of the nine hostages* : this nomenclature was bestowed upon him because he brought away hostages from different countries which he subdued. The brave Niall was, during one of his brilliant campaigns in Brittany, treacherously assassinated by *Eochaidh*, the deposed king of Leinster.

He was a brave and accomplished Prince, who united the wisdom of a philosopher to the chivalric courage of a champion. Possessing a great army, and a numerous navy, his power was so formidable, that it was courted and dreaded by all the Monarchs of Europe. He was passionately fond of military glory, and immediately after his accession, he sought an opportunity of gratifying his towering ambition. The Caledonians, at that juncture, being greatly oppressed and harrassed by the Romans, offered to become tributary to the Irish Monarch, on condition that he would drive the invaders out of their country, and protect them from future aggression. This offer was joyfully received by Niall, who instantly sailed for Scotland at the head of a formidable army, with which he soon drove the Roman legions into Britain. He made a compact with the Albanian Scots, which stipulated that an Irish prince should be their sovereign, and that the country, which was then called *Albania*,*

* That Scotland is indebted to Ireland for her origin, is an incontestible fact, which even Buchanan has admitted. To us the Scotch are indebted for letters and religion: to us they owe the nobility of their blood, and the lustre and eminence of their families. We have the authority of Camden, Routh, and Usher, that Scotland "continued tributary to the mother sovereignty, till released from such impost by the authority and influence of the presumptive heir to the Irish crown, the great *Columb Kille*, (the dove of the church,) whose sanctified mental sublimity preferred the renowned mission of becoming the apostle of the gospel light to the Picts, or, as Dr. Johnson has it, "to roving clans and savage barbarians," to the transient sway of the sceptre of Ireland; and that at length, upon the demise of the Albanian, the Scottish, or Irish dynasty prevail-

should ever after assume the appellation of "*Scotia Minor*," in order to perpetuate and preserve their origin and descent from Ireland, which at that time, and for ages before, was designated "*Scotia Major*." Having settled the affairs of Scotland, and allayed the spirit of turbulence and sedition in that country, he fitted out a large fleet, in which he embarked with a great army for Gaul, where he gained several victories; after which he returned in triumph to Ireland, with the spoils and captives of his conquest. Among the captives was PATRICK, afterwards the renowned Apostle of Ireland. Some illiberal Scottish writers have asserted, in the face of historical truth, that the Irish were immersed in barbarism, when St. Patrick arrived in Ireland. This is a mere bubble of Scotch prejudice and envy, which the breath of historical evidence has long since bursted, as the literature, philosophy, and arts of the Irish Druids shone with

ed, through which the present king of Great Britain derives his right and title to the throne."—*Transactions of the Gaelic Society*, vol I. p. 11.

St. Columb Kille was a truly apostolic character. He was lineally descended from the great Niall, of the nine hostages.

His life was written by Manus O'Donnell, prince of Tyrconnell, in 1520. St. Columba was the son of Felim O'Donnell, prince of Ulster; he was born in the year 521. Bede makes a very honourable mention of him. He erected many abbeys; among them the monasteries of Kells, in the country of Meath; Ardee, in the county of Louth; Slane, in the county of Meath, and also the celebrated abbey of Columkille, in the island of Iona, which had been granted to him by the king of the Picts. He was the apostle of the Caledonians, whom he converted to Christianity.—*Irish Antiquarian Researches*, vol. I. p. 118.

refulgent brightness, when *Albania* was benighted in the gloom of ignorance. Camden says that Cormack, the law-giver, the father-in-law of Fingal, in his famous book of "*Advice to Kings*," which he wrote for his son Carbrary, displayed such sound maxims of political wisdom and legislative justice, as well as literary taste, as would reflect honour on the most enlightened legislator of Greece." The old Irish fostered and protected genius, and the order of the Bards was held by them in the highest veneration,* and was liberally supported by every chieftain; and its influence, because it was intellectual, in many cases, was superior to that of the chief himself. Their soft or sublime effusions, which powerfully touched the passions, while they made the heart of the fiercest warrior glow with emotions of tenderness and love, or animated, and roused with resistless energy to the martial combat, were regarded not merely as the inspirations of genius, but as the still loftier conceptions of beings whose intuitive minds

* "There is no country in which poetry and music were held in higher estimation, or cultivated to a greater extent, than in Ireland. Well might it be called 'the land of song and story.'

Dewar's visit to Ireland.

'No nation under heaven (says the most patriotic and talented woman Ireland ever produced, Lady Morgan,) was ever more enthusiastically attached to poetry and music, than the Irish. Formerly every family had its poet, or bard, called *Filea Cro-tarie*: and indeed the very language itself seems most felicitously adapted to be the vehicle of poetic images; for its energy, strength, expression, and luxuriancy, never leave the bard at a loss for apposite terms to realize the thick coming fancies of his genius.'

The illustrious Bacon declares, in his *Sylva*, that 'no harp has the sound so melting and so prolonged, as the Irish harp'

were under the peculiar impulse of supernatural power. They alone could confer immortality in "deathless verse," and emblazon the deeds of the hero by the brilliant "light of song." The manners of these bards were polished, and the tone of their moral feeling elevated and improved, and their sublime and touching poetry was fraught with the enthusiasm of a sublime superstition, that impelled the people to the exercise of every manly virtue, to heroism, and military exploits. It is said that St. Patrick found us a pagan people. The assertion is false and unfounded,* for he has himself admitted, that our "Druids were remarkable for their learning and ingenuity." In diffusing the mild and purifying religion of the Gospel over Ireland, the talents of the Druids often frustrated his benign efforts. He however succeeded, in spite of their opposition, in dispelling the mists of druidical superstition from the understanding of our progenitors,† by opening the sacred vo-

The celebrated *Geminiani* declared, after hearing the soft and enrapturing strains of the Irish Orpheus, (Carolan,) 'that he found no music, on the west side of the Alps, so original, plaintive, and affecting, as the Irish.' The melancholy airs are uncommonly pathetic, so much so, (says the eloquent and accomplished Charles Phillips,) that I have heard of a distinguished Italian of great musical taste, who, after listening to some of them, suddenly exclaimed, '*that must be the music of a people who have lost their freedom!*'

* In the year of the incarnation, 423, Palladius was sent to be the first Bishop of the Scots, by Celestine, the Roman Pontiff."—*Bede*.

† "It is universally admitted, that there were Christian congregations in Ireland before the mission of Palladius, which

lume of inspiration, and declaring the divine counsel of Heaven. When the meek and pious St. Patrick established the Christian dispensation in Ireland,* the Monarch committed to his charge the archives of Tara, in which there were several hundreds of volumes, and many Ossianic manuscripts. The first suggestion of his active zeal, was to purge the archives of all those books that related to heathen worship, or druidical mystery, and thus consign to eternal oblivion every trace and relic of the hitherto prevailing superstition. "On this occasion we are told, that near four hundred volumes of our ancient literature were condemned to the flames, to the eternal regret of posterity." The Rev. Mr. O'Connor, in his late admirable work, (*The Ancient Chronicles of*

took place in A. D. 431 ; of which, were there no other proof, the testimony of Prosper forms sufficient evidence, for in his Chronicle of that year, he says that Palladius was sent to the Scots, (the Irish,) *believing in Christ.*"—*Lanigan's History of Ireland*, vol. I. p. 9.

"St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, in the second century, affirms, that the apostles propagated Christianity *as far as the light of the sun*, and particularly specifies *Iberia.*"—*Antiquarian Researches*.

"*Looghaire* was then king of Ireland. The apostle visited his court at Tara, produced his credentials from the Pope, and defended his doctrine with such forcible arguments, that numbers were converted, and the Queen herself was of the number. St. Patrick died in the year 493, in the 121st year of his age, after governing the Irish church, with unexampled piety and moderation, for sixty-one years. He was interred in the abbey of Downpatrick, which was founded by himself. In his tomb were afterwards placed the bodies of St. Bridget and St. Columba.—*O'Halloran's History of Ireland*.

Ireland) advances strong and acute arguments in support of the supposition, that Ossian's autograph manuscript of his poems was consumed with the other books.

It would be contrary to my purpose to expatiate on the long and wasting wars which took place between the Irish and the Danes, prior to the accession of the illustrious Brian Boroihme to the throne of Munster, in 965, as such a dissertation would swell tomes of history. Brian was richly endowed with every mental and personal quality requisite in the formation of the character of a magnanimous and patriotic King. Brave and accomplished, he seemed to be destined by nature to wield a sceptre, and wear a crown. At an early period of his life, he became Captain of the Dalgais,* and at the head of that gal-

* None but the sons of gentlemen would be admitted in this valiant legion. The dresses of the officers and soldiers were rich and gorgeous in the extreme. As it was considered the highest honour to be a member of this invincible body of troops, the following qualifications were essential to an admission to it, as it was constituted like Fingal's famous *Irish Militia*: 'every candidate must have a poetical genius, and be well acquainted with Irish and classic literature. He was to stand at the distance of nine ridges of land, with only a stick and a target, and nine soldiers were to throw their javelins at him at once, from which he was to defend himself unhurt, or be rejected. He was to have a heart inaccessible to fear, and his courage was to rise superior to the greatest danger. He was to have a strong arm, and to be able to hold his weapons steady, without shaking. He was to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and easily stoop under another that was as low as his knees; and be so expert as to mount his war horse at full gallop.'—*Warner's History of Ireland.*

tant band of warriors, he performed many feats of heroism, worthy of his chivalric character and royal descent.* In every rencontre he acquitted himself with capacity and courage. The higher his reputa-

This famous legion was first embodied in the reign of *Eadhu na Aughteach*, who was a distinguished monarch in Ireland, in the year of the creation, 2993. He was a most warlike prince, and he caused shields and targets of pure silver to be fabricated, which, with gorgeous chariots, and fine horses, he bestowed on the bravest officers of the *Dalgais*. He introduced swords of variegated blades of shining brilliancy, and after he had conquered all his enemies in the surrounding countries, he entered his capital in a triumphal chariot of fine silver, adorned with arms of different colours, such as he fought with.—*O'Halloran's History of Ireland*.

* So extremely ancient has the institution of Chivalry been among us, that we scarce know where to trace its origin. There were five equestrian orders in Ireland—the first was, *Nagh-Nase*, or Knights of the Golden Collar, and this order was peculiar to the blood royal, as without it no prince could presume to become a candidate for the throne. Of the other orders of chivalry, the *Curaithe na Craobh-rudh*, seem to rank foremost in our history. The great Nyall, and his descendants, were of this order, and designated “the heroes of the RED BRANCH.” The *Clana-Deagha*, or Munster Knights, were a most intrepid order of men. They bore on their ensign the arms of Munster, i. e. ‘Saturn, a King enthroned in majesty.’ The Leinster Knights were called *Clana-Baoisgne*, from *Baoisgne*, the ancestor of the celebrated *Fingal*. Their ensign bore “Jupiter, an harp, Sol, stringed Luna.” The Knights of Connaught, in early days, were of the Danaan race, and yielded not the palm, in point of courage and discipline, to any heroes in Europe. Their arms were, “Jupiter, a Cavalier completely armed.” This insignia was impressed on the reverse of the coins of Roderick O'Connor, the last monarch of Ireland.—*Harris, on the Irish Peerage*.

tion rose in arms, the more he became endeared to the soldiers and people, who were dazzled by the splendour of his exploits, and the nobleness of his sentiment. Considering his sphere of action, he might be almost ranked with Cæsar or Napoleon. A king, a leader, a legislator, a philosopher, is a rare union of human greatness, but of such aggrandizing greatness, he was a striking and luminous instance.

No sooner had he ascended the throne, than he took measures to avenge the death of his brother, Mahon, who had been betrayed by O'Donovan, chief of Kenry, in the county of Limerick, into the power of the Danes, who basely murdered him. O'Donovan was well aware that Brian had too much spirit and resolution to listen to any overtures of conciliation from the murderers of his royal brother. He, therefore, mustered all his forces, among whom were 1500 Danes, in order to resist the impending danger. The King of Munster, confident of success, at the head of his invincible Dalgais, attacked the combined army of Donovan with all the fury of revenge, over which he gained a complete victory. In this battle, not only O'Donovan and his son, but several of the principal Danish officers fell by the sword and spear. It was in this sanguinary engagement, Prince Morrough, the eldest son of Brian, by his first Queen *Morc*, daughter of the King of Connaught, made his first appearance on the theatre of war, and who, though then but 14 years of age, had the daring courage of engaging hand to hand with *Maolmuadh*,*

*-This King sanctioned O'Donovan's treachery to Mahon.

(the King of North Munster,) whom he slew after a gallant contest. This victory was not less important than glorious to Brian, for he avenged by it the murder of his brother, and secured to himself the crown of the two Munsters. After having subdued the Danes, and restored peace to his kingdoms, his next solicitude was to enact wise and just laws for the government of his people. The Tribunals of justice were filled with wise and discreet judges, so that the laws were equally and impartially administered. He caused the ruined abbeys and churches to be repaired, and colleges and academies to be erected and endowed, for the instruction of the youth of his kingdom; in fine, prosperity, beneficence, and education, were the bright emanations that flowed from his liberal and enlightened policy. In obedience to his orders, houses of hospitality were opened for the entertainment of strangers, and the lands originally appropriated to them restored.* If we can credit Mr. Cur-

* By the Druidical and Brehon laws, lands in every part of kingdom were allotted for the support of hospitality. The *Biatachs*, or keepers of the hospitable houses, were the third order in the state. Each of these was obliged to have 120 herds of cattle. He was to have four roads leading to his house; a hog, beef, and mutton, were always to be ready for the traveler and stranger. In the present age of *Pyrrhonism*, all these facts might be well doubted, had we not modern evidences to support and corroborate them; for Sir John Davis, Attorney-General, in the reign of James I. in his account of the "*blessed reforms*," made in the lands of the Irish, in the counties of Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh, and Louth, in those *precious days*, by the inquisition then taken, it appeared that the county of Monaghan, alone, contained 100 *Balle-beatachs*, to the support of which were allotted, by Mac Mahon, lord of the soil, 96,000 acres of land.—*O'Halloran*.

tin, the biographer of Brian, the number of these houses exceeded eighteen hundred in the two Munsters. Besides the improvements he made for the benefit of his subjects, in the judicial institution of the country, and the impulse which his munificence gave the arts and sciences, he supported the grandeur of the royal dignity in a magnificent style. The palace of his ancestors he enlarged and beautified with all the embellishment and decoration that architecture, painting and sculpture, could bestow, in order that it might afford suitable accommodation for his own residence, as well as for the foreign Princes and Ambassadors visiting his court. In this manner did Brian distinguish the grandeur and glory of his administration, by making his people participate in the blessings and benefits of peace and prosperity.

Brian having reduced several of the provincial kings to subjection, and imposed contributions upon them, his revenues were immense.

About this time, the Danes despairing of the possibility of making a predatory incursion into any of Brian's territories, invaded Meath with a powerful army, committing the most cruel and licentious excesses in their progress, plundering and setting fire to churches and monasteries, violating females, and carrying devastation, dismay, and terror, through the whole country. Malachy, King of Meath, filled with indignation, lost no time in levying an army to expel the invaders, who were rapidly advancing to the palace of Tara, where they expected to enrich themselves with great spoils.

Malachy, concentrating his army in an advantageous position, near Tara, waited the coming of the

enemy. The moment they appeared, the Irish army, fired with revenge, charged them with irresistible fury and impetuosity, letting loose carnage and havoc among the Danes, who began to retreat in the utmost confusion, after leaving 5,000 slain on the field of battle, among whom were Regnald, their General, and most of their principal officers.

After this glorious victory, Mallachy, forming a junction with Donochad O'Nyall, King of Ulster, ravaged and laid waste the district of Fingal, and marching with the utmost celerity on Dublin, he laid siege to that city, which he carried by assault, after a desperate conflict, releasing all the Irish captives, among whom were Domhnal, King of Leinster, and O'Neill, Prince of Tyrone. This blow prostrated the ambition of the Danes in the dust, and their affairs being irretrievably ruined, they readily submitted to whatever conditions the Monarch of Ireland thought proper to impose. While the King of Leinster was achieving these triumphs, Brian was not slumbering under the laurels of his fame, for in the midst of peace, he was preparing for war; his army was daily augmenting, and a considerable navy was set afloat in his ports.

After the capture of Dublin Malachy returned to his palace, so elated with his brilliant successes, that he began to estimate himself far superior to Brian, on whom he looked with the jealous eye of a rival. In order to make the King of Munster feel the power of his resentment, he lost no time in organizing a powerful confederacy of the provincial Kings against him. Among the Princes who joined in this coalition were

O'Phelan, king of Deasies, the Prince of Ossory, and two Danish Chiefs. Brian seeing the storm of internal commotion ready to burst upon his head, lost no time in opposing its rage. He quickly entered the field, and on his approach, the King of the Deasies, who commanded the allies, dreading the genius and bravery of his gallant adversary, sought safety in a precipitate retreat towards Waterford : thither Brian followed him by forced marches, and speedily brought him to action near that city.

The Dalgais ever foremost in the battle, charged the allied army with such heroic valour as to break their ranks and throw them into the greatest confusion. Finding themselves defeated at all points, they betook themselves to flight in the utmost trepidation ; the victorious Dalgais closely pursued them, and entered Waterford pellmell with the vanquished fugitives. The allied Princes seeing that all further resistance was useless, implored Brian to grant them peace on any terms he might think proper to prescribe. The monarch never refusing the olive branch, received the submission and hostages of the King of Leinster, the Prince of Ossory, the King of Leath, Mogha, and other chiefs of the confederacy, together with their respective tributes. Brian after these events marched into Meath to receive the homage and subsidies of the King of that country ; he thence proceeded to Connaught, where Maurice O'Connor, after suffering a defeat at Athlone, was obliged to pay a heavy contribution, and swear fealty to the Mamonian monarch. The valour, magnanimity, and patriotism of Brian were the theme of general praise ; and

his legislative wisdom and consummate talents, when contrasted with the effeminate passion and temporising spirit of Malachy, (who became enervated by luxury and women,) pointed him out as eminently qualified to preside at the head of the nation. His splendid deserts and sterling virtues attracted general admiration, and gave a preponderating weight to his character, in the scale of popular opinion. In a convention of chiefs of Munster, Connaught, and Ulster, it was decided that, as Malachy had given himself up to a life of pleasure and ease that tarnished the reputation which he gained at the battle of Tara, cancelled his claim to Irish gratitude ; and having forgotten the dangers which menaced his country, that Brian should be raised to the throne of Ireland. Malachy heard of these proceedings with surprise and indignation, and on being made acquainted with the resolution of the States, he declared that he would only give up the sovereignty with his life. During this interval Brian, at the head of his gallant Mamonians, was continually chasing and harassing the enemies of his country from one end of the Island to the other, and depriving the Danes of all their strong holds, among which was Dublin, their chief fortress. Malachy's waning fortunes, hastening to a crisis, he came to a resolution of defending his right to the last extremity.

The Princes and Chiefs of the nation having met in Congress, determined to send ambassadors to Malachy, to request that he would abdicate the throne civilly, otherwise that measures would be resorted to for the purpose of enforcing a compliance with the unanimous wishes of the nation. Though Malachy

was addicted to indolence and pleasure, yet the import of this message roused him from his apathy, and kindled again that warlike spirit which beamed so brilliantly at the battle of Tara, and the capture of Dublin. Like a Phœnix rising with renewed vigour from the ashes of his inglorious lethargy, he made the necessary preparations for maintaining the inviolability of his crown. At this juncture of his affairs, he despatched messengers to all the Princes of the kingdom, claiming, as King of Ireland, their allegiance and support. Notwithstanding the urgency of this message, and the imminent difficulties in which the King was involved, the Kings of Ulster and Connaught refused the required succours. The great O'NEILL desired the ambassadors to tell the King of Leinster, "that when the royal palace of Tara was possessed by his illustrious ancestors of the HEREMONIAN monarchs, that they knew how to defend it against all hostile attempts; and if Malachy was unable to keep possession of it, he had better deliver it up to the valiant King of Munster, who like a *patriot Prince* had reduced the common enemy, restored the liberty of the subject, and employed his time and abilities for the public good. I cannot, therefore, added O'Neill, oppose the Mamonians, especially the chivalrous Dalgais, whose virtues I respect, and whose friendship I desire." The defection of several Princes from the cause of Malachy, and the refusal of others to co-operate with him in the war against Brian, struck alarm and dismay into the fettered heart of the deserted King. In this strait of the extremity of his fortune, and convinced it were vain to resort to force of arms, he was

advised that the only alternative that remained for his adoption, was to repair to the camp of Tara, where Brian was with a great army, and make his submission to the King of Munster. In accordance with this resolution, he went to the camp of Brian, where he was received with all the honour and respect due to his high rank. Here he made a formal surrender of the crown and regalia of Ireland to Brian, at the same time paying him tribute and homage as his vassal. The generous soul of the monarch was touched with compassion for the misfortunes of Malachy, and in order to render them as light as possible, he assigned him the kingdom of Meath, and on his departure he made him and his retinue many valuable presents. Brian then made his triumphal entry into Tara, accompanied by all the Princes in the Island, who came to offer their submission to him, as well as by all the Nobles and Bishops, that attended to give eclat and pomp to the ceremony of his coronation. Seated on the throne of Heremon, he was solemnly anointed, and crowned by the Archbishop of Cashel; after which it was exultingly announced to the assembled multitude, by the heralds, "That the renowned King Brian, the son of *Cineide*, the son of Lorcan, the son of *Kennedy*, and so on to MILESUS, was SOLE MONARCH OF ALL IRLAND," which was received by a loud and simultaneous burst of acclamation by the people, and confirmed by their giving what is called the "*royal war-shout of applause*."*

* In 1494 *Poyning's Law* was passed in a parliament held in Drogheda, and that legislative assembly, also, then abolished the use of the *Irish war cry*, which the ancient Irish always

The country was now enjoying the blessings of profound peace, and the expanded intellect of the

shouted on commencing a battle. The exclamation *aboo*! was analogous to the Hebrew word *Aboi*: thus the war cry of the Kildare family was derived from the castle of *Crom*, in the county of Limerick. O'NEILL's cry was *Lamh drang aboo*! signifying *Huzza for the red hand*! O'Brian's cry was *Lamh laider aboo*! *Huzza for the strong hand*! The Earl of Desmond's cry was *Skan ail aboo*! *Huzza for the old place*! The Earl of Clanrickard's (Burke's) cry was *Gael rudh aboo*! *Huzza for the red stranger*, (or Englishman.) Fitzpatrick's cry was *Gaer laider aboo*! i. e. the *sharp and strong for ever*! O'Carroll's(a) cry was, *Showet aboo*! The Knight of Kerry's cry was, *Farri-buidhe aboo*! *Huzza for the yellow troop*! Ware says, the word *aboo* signifies a curse. The word is still used in the south of Ireland as an interjection of contempt or defiance, which I believe was the original intention of the expression, and used to excite dread and intimidation in the enemy. *Crom a boo*, the cry of the Geraldines, seems to convey something of a more powerfully overawing nature in the expression, than any other of the ancient Irish war shouts.—*Vide Remarks on Irish Literature and Antiquities*, by James S. Law, Esq. *Hibernian Magazine*, 1822.

(a) The sept of the O'Carroll's make a prominent figure in Irish history: they are, according to our antiquarians, descended from *Kean*, the third son of *Olioll Olum*, King of Munster. Tieve, the son of this *Kean*, was a distinguished warrior, who, by killing in battle his three rivals, procured for Cormac Mac Art the monarchy of Ireland. Cormac rewarded him with a grant of land in Connaught, and created him Prince of Uriel, in the county of Louth, and Lord of Ely. The family were deprived of all their estates by Cromwell. Charles O'Carroll was in great favour with James II, who, to compensate him for the loss of his paternal estates, made him a grant of a large tract of land in the state of Maryland, in the United States of America, which is still in the possession of his grandson, the venerable Charles O'Carroll, of Carrollston, who is now in the

monarch grasped every means that could prolong their continuance. To counteract the designs of the Danes, and to frustrate any future attempt which they might make to disturb the national tranquillity, he kept a standing army in the camps, and set about building three ships of war of an enormous size, with which he intended to invade Scotland. During this naval preparation he sent to *Maol-Mordha*, King of Leinster, whose sister Brian had lately married, requesting as a favour, that three of the finest and loftiest masts in his kingdom, might be forwarded for the royal navy. The King of Leinster promptly complied with the solicitation, and in order to enhance the presents, he resolved to accompany the conveyance of the masts to the court of his brother-in-law. On coming near Kincora the King dressed himself in his royal robes, the most magnificent of which was a rich silk mantle, gorgeously embroidered with gold, and studded with diamonds of the purest water. This spangled mantle was one of the gifts with which Brian presented him as a token of regard and friendship. By some accident the golden clasp which fastened the cape of the mantle at the neck, flew off and was lost. When the cordial greetings of congratulation and welcome were reciprocated in the chamber of state, the King of Leinster retired to the apartment of his sister, the Queen, and begged that she might affix another clasp to the mantle, as he wished to wear it at the audience

91st year of his age. He is grandfather to her Excellency, Marianne, the present Marchioness of Wellesley, and of Lady Harvey.—See *Irish Ant. Researches*, vol. I. p. 99.

which her husband was to give that day to Princes and ambassadors.

The Queen, being a woman of true Irish spirit, and lofty pride, tauntingly replied to her brother, "It is not for the daughter of the Heremonian Monarchs, on whose majesty centuries of virtue and bravery have shed their lustre, to array and deck out in the servile livery of subjection, the pusillanimous representative of her illustrious ancestors, who would sooner die than bend the knee of homage at the footstool of a conqueror, or offer, like you, the incense of flattery with a craven and sycophantic group of tributary kings. The royal blood of Melesius, which warmed with the fire of enthusiastic courage the bounding hearts of a legion of heroic kings, has become frozen, degenerated, and torpid in your veins!" The king appeared like a man struck by a thunderbolt, at this satirical rebuke from his sister. Though justly maddened with rage and resentment, at her ungracious treatment, he yet suppressed his anger, and refrained, at that time, from making a recriminatory reply. But the next day, as he was looking upon a game at chess, in which Morrogh and one of his cousins were engaged, he unfairly, as a stander by, advised a move which caused the prince to lose the game. Morrogh, provoked at the intrusive suggestion of the King of Leinster, sarcastically remarked "*that if his Majesty had given as good advice at the battle of Glean-mamha, the Danes would not have suffered so signal a defeat.*" The King, irritated by the keenness of the retort, quickly replied in the kindled spirit of resentment, "*That if the Danes had been defeated by his advice,*

he was resolved soon to put them in a way to retrieve their loss, and take their full revenge of him, and the King his father." Burning with indignation at the indignities aimed at him by the Queen and son of Brian, he came to the determination of having revenge. As soon as he arrived at his own palace, he summoned all his chiefs, and related to them, in the most aggravating manner, the ignominious insults which were offered him at Brian's court. They, led away by his pathetic appeal to their sympathies, unanimously resolved on joining the Danes, and on attacking the King of Ireland in his very palace, before he could place himself in a posture of defence.

Maolmordha soon found himself at the head of a large army, chiefly composed of Danes, who were overjoyed at the prospect of once more gaining possession in "*a land flowing with milk and honey.*" The King of Leinster, perceiving his ranks daily increase, sent forth heralds to declare war against Brian, and to challenge him to a battle in the vicinity of Dublin. The declaration of war was returned by the King of Ireland against the King of Leinster, and every measure put in practice that could contribute to the subversion of the formidable combination, which that King organized against the welfare and liberties of Ireland.

The heroic Dalgais were soon joined by the troops of Munster and Connaught, with their several princes at their head. In the beginning of April, 1014, Brian, with a well appointed and highly disciplined army, rapidly marched to Kilmainham, near Dublin, where he encamped. Though the veteran Monarch

was then in the eighty-eighth year of his age, yet he retained all the vigour and spirit of a warrior; and his ardent patriotism gave a stimulating impulse to his mental faculties, and kindled in his heart the animating courage and fire of youth.

Both armies continued some days, in a state of inactive suspense, quite near each other; but at length Brian made a movement to Clontarf, in order to induce the Danes to march out of Dublin, and give him battle. This disposition had the desired effect, as the Danes, and their Swedish auxiliaries, with their chiefs at their head, soon began to approach Brian's camp, in conjunction with the Leinster troops, under the command of the King of Leinster. Brian drew up his army in order of battle, with his accustomed skill and precision. The right wing of the Irish army was composed of the royal guards, the chief nobility of Munster and Connaught, the invincible tribe of Dalgais, and all the princes of Brian's blood, as well as the King of Meath, and his forces, were ranked in this formidable division, under the orders of Prince Morrogh, and the Prince of Ulster. The left wing was placed under the command of CATHAL O'CONNOR, King of Connaught. The troops of South Munster, under their different chiefs, with those of the Deasies, formed the central phalanx, over which CIAN, the son of *Malmuadh* was appointed general.

The army thus drawn up, in battle array, presented a most magnificent appearance; their shining armour, glittering spears, and waving banners, displayed a grand and imposing spectacle. Prior to the fatal signal being given, the good old King rode through the

anks, with a crucifix in one hand, and his drawn sword in the other. As he passed through the different troops, he harrangued them with great force of eloquence. He exhorted them to do their duty as soldiers and Christians, in the sacred cause of their country and religion. He reminded the Dalgais of the many triumphs which their predecessors gained under the renowned *Fingal*,* as well as of their glo-

* *Fingal*, the son of *Cumhal*, the renowned 'General of the *Finnian* hosts.' His mother was *Murin*, daughter of *Thaddy*, who was called the '*white monarch*' of Ireland. He married the daughter of the celebrated *Cormac McArt*, the *LAW GIVER*, who ascended the throne of Ireland in the year 254.

There is no monarch in Irish history, except *Brian*, more celebrated for his literary attainments, political wisdom, and sage maxims of jurisprudence, than *Cormac*. As a poet he ranked high, so much so, that he obtained the estimation of a prophet. *Fingal*, his son-in-law, commanded his armies, and was the confidential associate of all his studies, councils, and achievements. *Fingal* was not more valiant than he was accomplished, as his mind was richly endowed with every liberal art and science prevailing in the age in which he lived. He eminently distinguished himself when he assisted the Scotch to expel the Roman legions from *Caledonia*. The fame of his heroic military exploits, at the head of the Dalgais, or '*Irish militia*,' has afforded a wide scope for the exercise of talent, and the panegyric of poetry. By the daughter of *Cormac*, he had two sons, the famous *Ossian* and *Fergus*, who have acquired such immortal renown in poetry and arms. *Carbary* was the eldest son of *Cormac*, who, on mounting the throne, thought proper to insult *Ossian*, his nephew, at his coronation feast, which so irritated the poet-hero, that he vowed to be revenged of his uncle. The quarrel raised a barrier of implacable resentment, which proved insuperable to reconciliation. *Ossian* appealed to the *Dalgais*, and reminded them of the triumphs which they gained under his father and grandfather, *Cumhal*, who fell at the battle of *Lugha*, in the year 220, by the hand of *Gull Mac Mornie*, the champion of Con-

rious feats of heroism in the thirty conflicts, in which they had combatted under his own command. "Your country," continued the venerable Monarch, "reposes all her hopes on your valour; she is confident of your zeal and courage, and that you will shield her from the miseries with which the cold-blooded and perfidious Danes would devastate her bosom. You know that they are strangers to religion and humanity, they are therefore big with the hope of violating the fairest daughters of the land, and of enriching themselves with the spoils of sacrilege and plunder; for they have impiously fixed on the very day on which the Redeemer of the world was crucified, to destroy his votaries and sacred temples; but that God, whose cause you are to fight this day, will be present with you, and deliver his enemies into your hands." The whole army received this address with shouts of enthusiastic exclamation. Brian appeared greatly affected, and was proceeding to take his station in the centre of the army, when all the Chiefs interposed, and implored him, on account of his age and infirmity, to retire to his tent, from the field of battle, and leave the chief command to the heroic Morrogh. He reluctantly yielded to their entreaties.

naught. The moment they became acquainted with Ossian's request of assistance, they placed themselves under his orders, and attacked the troops of Carbary, at Gabra, in Meath. The battle was so fierce, that the monarch, and his ally, the king of Connaught, were mortally wounded on one side, and Oscar, the son of Ossian, and the king of Munster, (the son-in-law of Fingal,) were killed in the engagement.—Vide *Exile of Erin's Letters on the Ossianic Controversy*, in the NATIONAL ADVOCATE, and TRUTH TELLER, March, 1826.

No sooner had the pious King withdrawn, than the Irish army, with a united voice, called on their chiefs to lead them on in the path of glory. The Dalgais raised the "*sun-beam standard of Fingal*,"* bearing the inscription VICTORY OR DEATH! and rushed, with their wonted firmness and intrepidity to the charge,

* The old Irish poets denominated the standard of Fingal, '*The sun-burst*.' In an Ossianic manuscript, the following sentence occurs: "*We raised the SUN-BURST to the staff*," which means literally, *brilliancy of sun*.

"*Fingal* made the Scotch tributary long before the reign of Niall. He invaded Caledonia in the year 255, where he planted a colony as an establishment for *Carbry Riada*, his cousin-German. This colony was often protected from the power of the Romans by the Irish militia, under the command of Fingal and Ossian, occasionally stationed in the circumjacent country; hence the claim of the Scots to Ossian.

"It is remarkable, that the genius of the Ossianic style still prevails over the wild effusions of the modern and unlettered bards of Ireland; while even the remotest of Scottish minstrelsy respires nothing of that soul which breathes in "*the voice of Cona*," and the metrical slippancy which betrays its existence, seems neither to rival, nor cope with, that touching sublimity of measure, through whose impressive medium the genius of Ossian effuses its inspiration. In Ireland, it has been, and is still, the measure in which the sons of song breathe "*their wood notes wild*."—*Vide Lady Morgan's Wild Irish Girl*.

Fingal fell in an engagement at *Rathbree*, on the banks of the Boyne, A. D. 294; from whence the name Rathbree was changed into that of Killeen, or '*Cill-Fhin*,' the tomb of Fin.—*Walker's History of Irish Bards*.

Killeen, in the county of Meath, is the beautiful and romantic residence of the Earl of Fingall, to whose noble family it has belonged since the reign of Richard I.—*See Anthologia Hibernica, and Archdall's Peerage*.

making death and destruction pave their pathway with the bodies of the slain : all the other Chiefs, except the base and ignoble Malachy, (who with the forces of Meath wheeled off at the commencement of the conflict,) evinced a valiant courage and bravery worthy of their cause and fame. The onset was terribly fierce and obstinate. The Danes, it must be admitted, fought with a resolute courage that required all the genius and valour of the Irish generals to oppose and contravene. Every man stood immoveable in his rank, and every foot of ground was contested. When Morrough from his post espied the treacherous defection of Malachy, he, with great presence of mind, cried out to his brave Dalgais, " that this was the fortunate moment to cover themselves with immortal glory, as they, alone, would have the unrivalled honour of cutting off that formidable body of the enemy." He then snatched the standard of Fingal, and exclaimed "*Before the lapse of one hour, this must wave either over the tents of the Danish camp, or over my dead body !*" The other Chiefs, catching the fire of emulation from his heroism, furiously precipitated themselves on the foe ; nothing could stand the shock of this charge, which spread consternation and havoc through the enemy's legions. Morrough, and the King of Connaught, were pre-eminent, even among the other gallant Chiefs, for the prodigies of valour which they performed. The Danes, seeing their numbers thinned by the unconquerable bravery of the Irish, and not daring to rally their discomfited troops, looked only for safety in a disastrous flight,

leaving all their camp equipage, &c. in the hands of the victors.

Thus I have summed up, in a brief compendium, some of the principal events in Brian's eventful reign, I will now submit to the attention of the reader Mr. M'Carran's poetical description of the battle of Clontarf.

BATTLE OF CLONTARE.

THIS famous battle was fought on the 23d of April, 1014. The Irish army consisted of thirty thousand men, commanded by Brian Boirumhi, Monarch of Ireland, who was then in the 88th year of his age. At the commencement of the action, he was persuaded by his officers to retire and give up the command to his son Murrogh.

The Danes and their allies were nearly twice the number, and were commanded by Maolmordha, King of Leinster, who fought against his country that day, to revenge an insult he had received at the Court of Brian. The battle began at 8 o'clock in the morning and lasted till sunset.

Malachie, prince of Meath, who with the Methians, under his command, retired from the field at the commencement of the engagement, gives the following account of the battle :—

“ I retired (says he) with the troops under my command, to an eminence separated from the combatants by a field and a ditch only. The appearance of the men, the glittering of their swords, spears, and battle-axes, and the brightness of their armour, exhibited at once a glorious and an awful sight. The engagement soon commenced, and in less than half an hour it was impossible to distinguish the combatants from each other; even a father or a brother could not be known,

except by his voice. So closely were they engaged, and so covered with blood, which scattered on every side by the wind, which was then sharp and high, separated as we were from them, the spears, swords, and battle-axes of our men were so entangled by the quantity of blood and clotted hair flying from the field of battle, that with difficulty and constant labour only, were they able to disengage them and keep their ranks, nor was it for some time after that their arms recovered their former lustre. The scenes of carnage that spread far and wide, were terrible beyond description, so much so that the very sight of them to us spectators, appeared infinitely more distressing and terrifying than they could possibly be to the parties engaged. From sun-rising to the evening did the battle continue with such unremitting slaughter, that the returning tide was stained red with their blood."

Seven thousand of the Irish fell in this battle, and fourteen thousand of the Danes. From the vast number of chiefs that fell, we may form some idea of the carnage on both sides. On the side of the Irish were slain the immortal Brian, his son and General, Murrough, with two of his brothers, and his son Tirlogh, who, though but fifteen years of age, performed prodigies of valour. In short, few of the chiefs of either side escaped. This battle, entirely broke the power of the Danes in this country, and the survivors took an eternal farewell of Erin, after having had a footing in it upwards of 200 years.—(*O'Halloran's History of Ireland.*)

THE
BATTLE OF CLONTARF.

A POEM.

HAIL ! soul-inspiring muse, the bondman's friend,
To sing old Erin's praise, thy influence lend ;
One of her sons invokes thy sacred aid,
O grant his boon, thou sweetly soothing maid !
Tho' poor, unlettered—still he owns thy sway,
Thy converse oft has sooth'd his weary way.
Old Erin, Once thy hospitable seat,
The land of Bards and warriors good and great ;
But now, alas ! her glory is no more,
Her ancient race are exil'd from her shore,
In foreign climes that valour they must shew
With which their fathers oft repell'd the foe ;
Or those who linger on her much-lov'd soil,
A scanty pittance gain with care and toil ;
The fields their fathers own'd they're doom to till,
And bow obsequious to a master's will.
The offspring of her chiefs, to labour bred,
With scarce a roof to screen their wretched head
From summer's heat or winter's pinching cold,
And doom'd to beg for bread when weak and old !
Who can this picture view with tearless eye—
My bursting bosom heaves the bitter sigh.

Her ancient laws, her warriors—all are gone,
Her sons are scattered and her glory done ;
Even Brian's offspring—Brian, great and good,
Who for her freedom spill'd his precious blood,
Do toil for bread upon the hallowed land
Where their great father held supreme command.
Such is the fate of Erin's gen'rous race !
In battle lions—lambs in time of peace ;
When trumpets blew the fields of death they press'd
But conquered foes they cherished and caress'd ;
Glory their aim, their chief delight was war,
When honor call'd no dangers could them scare .
If bold invaders landed on their coast,
They found old Erin's sons a hardy host,
With hearts resolv'd their country to defend,
Or in her cause their precious lives to end !
Such, Erin ! were thy sons when Brian the Great
In Tara's lofty Halls did rule in state,
Surrounded by his chiefs—a hardy band,
Each in himself an host to guard the land .
Such were thy sons, who to expel the Danes
Their standards rais'd on Clontarf's sea-girth plains.
King Brian's years had numbered eighty-eight
When to the field he march'd in mighty state
And pitch'd his tents before the Danish host,
Resolv'd to die or drive them from the coast.
But, first a council calls, his chiefs obey,
The regal tent they throng without delay ;
Each plac'd in order on his lordly seat,
The king advanc'd on high in robes of state.
But now, my muse, thy aid I here invoke
How to describe the chiefs and how they spoke

Three regal kings did wait on Brian's nod,
He, in the midst appeared their guardian god :
Upon his right sat Ulster's potent king,
He from green Ullin hardy troops did bring ;
The great O'Neils he led, himself the chief,
At sight of whom the Danes were struck with grief.
The Ultonian knights those northern robbers fear'd,
And oft before had fled when they appear'd ;
For who with them in courage could outvie,
They'd fight and conquer, or gloriously they'd die.
The O'Donel's likewise, lords of Donegal,*
Like trusty vassals, followed at his call ;
The great O'Cahan's and a hundred more,
Whose swords had oft been dy'd in hostile gore
Beneath his banners rang'd in armour bright
On Clontarf's plains, all eager for the fight ;
No coward fears were lodged within their breast,
For oft the field of war their feet had press'd.
Old Connaught's king with all his warlike train,
In polish'd steel encamp'd upon the plain ;
To aid great Brian in firm array they stood,
Their Chief, great Cathal, sprung from noble blood,
Attended by O'Henie, famed afar
For mighty deeds amongst the sons of war.
The Host of Heaven these Danes have oft defied,
This day they choose on which our Saviour died.

* "According to Irish writers, the O'Donell family are descended from Conal Golban, son of Niall, of the nine hostages, monarch of Ireland. The said Niall having granted the land now called the county of Donegal, to his son Conall, it was denominated after him Tyr-Conall."—*Irish Antiquarian Researches*.

O'Kelly next, a prince of high renown,
Who oft had caus'd the Danes to bite the ground.
O'Flaherty, M'Dermott, and numbers more,
In arms did shine oft stained with Danish gore.
Next Leinster's Chiefs led on a hardy band
Resolv'd to free old Erin's hallow'd land ;
Fierce o'er the field they pour'd their might along.
Their Bards in front the martial strains prolong.
The Munster Chiefs with arms refulgent bright
In order stood, all panting for the fight.
Brian's gallant nephews, in number just fifteen,
Their arms resplendent, scarfs of lovely green.
Their massy falchions oft in strife were tried,
And Danish blood the polished blades oft dy'd.
Five warlike sons did follow their great sire,
Breathing revenge, their eyes shot living fire,
Beneath their tread this sea-girt isle was shook,
The foe drew back with terror from their look.
Such were the chiefs that Brian did surround,
The monarch rose—the silence was profound ;
He spoke—Ye warlike chiefs of Ulster lend an ear,
Of Leinster, Munster, Connaught, pray draw near,
As christian soldiers lead your troops to-day,
And to these Danish robbers don't give way,
Your injured country now requires your aid—
In freedom's cause what Irishman's afraid !
Your brave ancestors groan'd beneath their yoke,
By you, their sons, this chain will soon be broke,
Religion calls, be men, and quick obey,
Nor sheath your swords till freedom gains the day.
These sanguinary Danes let no man spare,
To lead you on will be my only care,

To extirpate Milesius' daring line,³
And inundate our isle with blood divine,
But God and freedom, in whose cause you fight,
Will bless your arms and grant you heavenly might.
Yes, freedom, heaven-born maid, will crown our toil,
And our oppressors' blood enrich our soil.
Ye Gods ! what Irishman would be so base
As stoop to slavery and foul disgrace ?
No !—with our swords let's free old Erin's Isle,
The cause is just, and God will on us smile ;
Let each maintain his post, and firmly stand,
And soon these haughty Danes shall quit our land.
The warrior sure is bless'd who bravely dies,
And for his country falls a sacrifice !
Say then, brave Chiefs, shall we the war provoke,
Or live inglorious 'neath the Danish yoke ?
He ceased :—a Chieftain rose, O'Connor named,
For mighty deeds in warfare he was famed ;
His glittering armour shone like new born day,
His nodding crest did float like streamers gay ;
My voice, he cried, great Monarch, is for war,
Lead on our troops, the foe shall fly afar ;
Our swords and spears with courage let us use,
To fight for freedom, who would dare refuse ?
The coward who would from his colours fly,
Shall, by this hand, ingloriously die.
Too long in bondage vile we have remain'd—
This day let Erin's freedom be regained ;
Let each his post maintain, nor quit the field,
Till Denmark's hosts to Erin's sons do yield.
He ceased, and forth his trusty sword he drew,
To marshal forth his troops the hero flew.

The Prince of Ulster next, a Chieftain bold,
Whose arms refulgent shone like polished gold ;
His mein majestic—the Chiefs he thus address'd,
While martial ardour warm'd his noble breast :—
Most potent Monarch, and you Chiefs attend,
Who here are met your country to defend
From the incursions of the daring foe,
Whose barbarous deeds have left poor Erin low ;
Brothers in arms ! let us as one unite,
And ne'er give back—for freedom fair we fight ;
Let's pour our hosts on the embattled plain,
And live all free, or in her cause be slain ;
With Danish blood let's deluge our lov'd isle,
And strew their bodies o'er our fertile soil ;
A warrior's glory is to meet the foe—
Let death or slaughter follow every blow.
As for myself, I ne'er will quit the plain,
Till freedom smiles, or in her cause be slam.*
He paused—the Chiefs, as if they were inspir'd,
All drew their swords, and from the tent retir'd
To join their troops on the ensanguined fields,
And loud and long they struck their bossy shields.
The household troops of Brian form'd the right,
All chosen men, and well inur'd to fight ;
The tribe of Dalgais and princes of the blood,
With shining arms, in columns closely stood.

* He spoke prophetically, for he fell pierced with wounds, after having avenged the death of Prince Murrogh, by killing his cowardly assassin, the Danish chief Plait. The gallant king of Ulster was the nephew of Brian, and his worthy and faithful companion in all his honours. He might truly and emphatically be denominated the worthy son of the hero of the nine hostages.

The Prince of Meath did this division join,
His coward soul, incased in steel, did shine.
Murrogh and Sitrick had the chief command
Of the right wing—a daring, dreadful band.
The Connaught troops upon the left were plac'd,
Commanded by great Cathal, in armour cas'd ;
The field he trod like Mars, the god of war,
His blood-red plumes aloft did wave afar ;
The living flame shot terror from his eye,
His falchion gleam'd a meteor thro' the sky.
The centre troops led on by Cian bold,
Whose five-fold shield was orb'd with sold gold ;
His shining spear did quiver in his grasp,
A brazen helmet round his brows did clasp.
Thus host on host they pour'd along the field,
Those armed with spears, these glitt'ring swords did
wield ;
With bossy shields of virgin gold so bright,
Like stars falling on the dark robe of night,
In close battalions the dusty field they tread,
And each bold tribe their Chieftain at their head.
So when the sun does dip the western main,
And to their fold the flocks return again ;
The sturdy bull does foremost quick advance,
Before, behind, around his eyes do glance,
And if a wolf or lion does appear,
He beats his sides, and bellows forth his fear.
So watch'd the chiefs the thick'ning field of war,
No dastard fears their mighty souls could scare :
Mars and Bellona took their airy flight
From rank to rank, and kindled up the fight ;

The hills re-echoed back the clarion's note,
And high aloft the streamers gay did float ;
A thousand Bards did in the front appear,
The song of war did echo long and clear
Each warrior drew his sword, a meteor bright,
And with fresh ardour burned for the fight ;
Rank press'd on rank, each to sustain the shock,
And shield touch'd shield, a moving brazen rock,
Behind whose orbs a wood of spears arise,
Whose polish'd heads shot lightning thro' the skies ;
In order close the warriors firmly stand,
Resolved to die, or free their native land.
Now in the front the Monarch does appear,
In his right hand he shook a massive spear,
A crucifix his left exposed to view,
Thus arm'd, from rank to rank the Monarch flew.
Behold, he cried, 'tis for your faith you fight,
For freedom fair, and old Irene's right ;
Your wives and daughters will repay your toil,
You guard their honour on your native soil.
Should Denmark conquer, to satiate their lust,
Your tender wives they'd humble in the dust.
As for myself, though silver'd o'er with age,
You'll find me in the battle's hottest rage ;
Our country calls, the mandate let's obey,
May honour guide us through this dreadful day.
This having said, he spurr'd his charger on,
And in the front his arms refulgent shone ;
His great example fir'd the warlike band,
They gave a shout that echoed o'er the land.
Come ! lead us on they cry, to meet the foe,
For Erin's cause let's strike the final blow.

But first they cry, good father, quit the field,
Your son, great Murrogh, can assume your shield ;
Old Erin's weal your safety does require,
Now quit the field, and to your tent retire.
Not for myself, replies the Monarch great,
From fields of war and carnage I retreat,
But at your lov'd request I quit the field,
And to my eldest son resign my shield.
'The burnish'd seven-fold orb he then did place
On Murrogh's arm, the eldest of his race ;
'Take this, my son, the ancient hero cried,
In fields of strife its front has oft been tried ;
No feeble arm its bossy studs can sway,
Beneath its orb prone many warriors lay :
May you, my son, in arms and virtue shine,
And leave this shield untainted unto thine.
'The pious son upon his knees did fall,
My king, my friend, my father, and my all,
'When I this shield resign but with my life,
May plagues pursue me thro' the fields of strife ;
By me your every wish shall be obeyed,
Great Brian's son of death is not afraid.
Go then, my sire, and in your tent repose,
Be mine the task to rout old Erin's foes.
'Thus having said, he raised the shield on high,
'The polish'd orb shot lightning thro' the sky ;
'The glittering belt across his shoulders hung,
And with his spear the warboss loud he rung ;
His troops obey the sound, all firmly stood,
Resolved in Erin's cause to spill their blood.

Again, O ! Muse, thy mighty aid impart,
Let every period shine with thy great art ;

How Erin's foes advanced, I mean to sing,
How spears extended, brazen armours ring.
And first, that renegade, Malmordha named,*
On Leinster's fertile fields for valour fam'd,
Against his country with the Danes did join,
A traitor to his faith, and blood divine ;
'The chief command he held o'er every Dane,
His treacherous deeds do Erin's annals stain,
But doom'd on Clontarf's plains to yield his breath,
Too base a soul for such a glorious death.
Denmark and Sweden hardy troops did send,
And Norway's frozen coast did succour lend ;
Britain and Normandy did plough the deep,
In native blood our much-loved Isle to steep ;
Full sixty thousand, cas'd in armour bright,
On Clontarf's plains stood ready for the fight ;
O'er these in chief did Leinster's prince command,
Resolv'd in mind to spoil his native land.
Broder, the Dane, commanded on the right,
Full well he knew to counter-march and fight ;
His height gigantic, dreadful was his look,
In either hand a massive spear he shook ;
The solid earth did tremble as he trod,
He frown'd defiance to both man and God ;

* The Dalgais, actuated with feelings of inveterate revenge against the King of Leinster, for his treasonable alliance with the ruthless enemies of Ireland, singled out the Leinster troops, and charged them so furiously, that they fell like grass before the mower's scythe. Though the King of Leinster opposed them with a formidable resistance, yet he could not withstand their overwhelming rage ; for not only he, but all his Chiefs, and 300 of his best soldiers were sacrificed in this sanguinary conflict.

To drench old Erin's plains in native gore,
The haughty infidel had oft-times swore.
Upon the left bold Sitrick took his stand,
The Danes of Erin bow'd to his command ;
Haughty, unjust, revengeful was the Dane,
And many sons of Erin he had slain ;
In brazen armour he did shine afar—
Unjust he was in peace, but bold in war ;
To crush old Erin now he took the field,
And swore e'en Brian's race should to him yield.
Such were the men old Erin did oppose,
All tried in fight, and no inglorious foes.
Their chief advanced upon the dusty field,
And raised aloft his seven-fold brazen shield.
He spoke :—You Danes, Norwegians, allies, hear,
Who on this plain in brightest arms appear,
Your trusty swords I know have oft been tried,
And in the blood of foes have oft been dy'd ;
This day I lead you on against a foe,
That will return with interest every blow ;
Let each his post maintain, and keep his ground,
With Erin's shining spoils you will be crown'd ;
Each daring soldier well shall be repaid,
Who in an Irish heart does sheath his blade.
And now the brazen trumpets from afar,
Blew loud and long the dreadful notes of war ;
The sons of Erin gather in their pride,
And pour along the field with martial stride.
The Methian prince now struck with sudden fear,*
With all his host retreated to the rear,

* This was the crisis which Malachy chose to revenge him-

A shame to manhood and to Erin's race
Who thus would shun the battle with disgrace.
'The son of Brian firmly did advance,
And in his hand he shook his mighty lance,
The Dalgais tribe he quickly thus address'd,
While close around their chief the warriors press'd—
Friends, fellow-soldiers ! Murrogh loudly cried,
Whose swords have oft in Danish blood been dy'd,
At length the glorious hour is at hand
To drive the Danes from Erin's hallowed land—
'The Methians have withdrawn—be yours the fame
'To rout the foe, and gain a glorious name.
'They answered with a shout, their swords they drew,
And through the field of death with ardour flew.
High towering in front, like Mars of old,
Great Murrogh stood, encased in shining gold,
His path was dreadful o'er the bloody plain,
He ramparts rais'd of dying and of slain,
His battle-axe and sword streaming with gore,
High in the front his seven-fold shield he bore,
Behind his sword grim death, with ghastly look,
Distained with blood, his keen edg'd scythe oft shook ;
Rank press'd on rank, their spears a moving wood,
Their burnish'd armour stain'd with human blood ;
'Their darts, a brazen shower, obscured the sun,
And in the shade their deadly course they run ;
'The groans of dying men, and victor's cries,
With trumpets' dreadful blast did rend the skies,

self on the Monarch, for pushing him off the throne of Ireland, which, though he had quietly acquiesced in, for a dozen of years, yet it is plain he had not forgiven it.—*Warner*

Nor would the Danes nor would the Irish yield,
The blood in torrents pours along the field.
The left brave Cathal leads to meet the foes,
Apostate Leinster's King he does oppose ;
Their shields in front do form a brazen wall,
Each man resolved to conquer or to fall ;
Their shining javelins at their foes they fling,
And louder still the brazen armour ring ;
No ambuscade to dart upon the foe,
But man meets man, and blows returned with blow.
And now from right to left, the closing war
Does every man to single combat dare ;
Closer and closer still the warriors pressed,
Shield joins to shield, and nearly breast meets breast.
The victors on one side soon victims lie,
And all resolve to conquer or to die ;
Round all the field the purple blood does flow,
And Erin's fate hangs on a single blow.
How dreadful to behold such deadly strife,
Where every blow is followed by a life ;
Firm and unmoved, just like a solid rock,
The Danes and Irish stand the dreadful shock ;
From every eye shoots forth the living fire,
And man on man does gloriously expire ;
Mars, bath'd in blood, the conflict does survey,
And adds new horrors to the dreadful day.
And now great Murrogh raised his father's shield,
Whose sevenfold orb no feeble arm could wield ;
Beneath its shade, encased in armour bright,
Stood Murrogh's eldest son, prepared for fight ;
Tho' not fifteen, he followed his great sire,
For Erin's rights to conquer or expire.

With anxious gaze now Murrogh views the field,
And pond'ring thus—Ye gods ! must Erin yield ?
Her lovely daughters, humbled in the dust,
Shall they, so heavenly fair, yield to their lust ?
'This lovely isle that decks the western main,
Must it be rul'd by any haughty Dane ?
My father, brothers, children, must they all
Beneath the fury of these tyrants fall ?
My wife—but hold, the thought does fire my brain !
'This sea-girt isle shall groan with heaps of slain,
Rivers of blood shall flow, whole hosts shall bend,
And ghosts unnumbered to the shades I'll send,
Ere she, or any daughter of this isle
Shall to a Dane submit, or be his spoil.
Thus having said, his falchion broad he drew,
And 'midst the Danish hosts he quickly flew ;
So pours a winter's torrent o'er the plain,
And in its course sweeps all into the main ;
And if to save his grain the farmer tries,
'The mighty stream o'erwhelms him and he dies.
So Murrogh thro' the Danes with fury broke,
His course terrific, death in every stroke ;
His eyes shot terror thro' the warring foe,
They back recoil to shun the coming blow,
His bloody path was strew'd with heaps of dead,
And souls in thousands to old Pluto fled ;
Close by his side his son, young Turlogh stood,
His maiden sword redden'd with human blood ;
To imitate his sire in warlike fight
Was all his wish—was all his soul's delight.
From right to left the father and the son
Their dreadful course of devastation run ;

The Danes in terror from their fury fled,
Their path was chok'd with dying and with dead.
Carolus and Conmael call'd by name,
Two mighty Danes in fields of warlike fame,
Their height gigantic, dreadful was their look,
And glitt'ring falchions in their hands they shook ;
Their ample shields were like the coming day,
And oft were tried in many a bloody fray.
Great Murrogh's dreadful course they mark'd afar,
Where, in the front, he tower'd the god of war ;
Thus they commun'd—Shall Murrogh's single arm
Our hosts defy and fill us with alarm ?
Our force let's join, and meet him on the field ;
Shall we, inured to arms, to Murrogh yield ?
If forc'd to fly to Denmark's frozen coast,
Our honor's fled, our hard-earned laurels lost ;
The beauteous maids we love will us disdain,
First let our breathless corpses strew the plain,
Ere with disgrace to Denmark we return,
And cause our warlike sires in tears to mourn.
Thus having said, their shining swords they drew,
To stop great Murrogh's course they quickly flew.
The hero marked them as they did advance,
And at them flung his brazen-pointed lance ;
Carolus' shield it struck and pierced it through,
And from his side a purple current drew,
Prone on his face the Danish warrior lies,
He bites the dust, he trembles and he dies !
His mighty soul now seeks the nether world,
By Murrogh's spear to Pluto's regions hurl'd.
And now Conmael threw his vengeful dart,
He aim'd it at the warrior's gen'rous heart,

It cut the liquid air and struck his shield,
And quivering stood within its brazen field.
And now the warriors drew their falchions bright,
The Danes and Irish trembled at the sight ;
Both armies now suspend the work of death,
And silent stand on Clontarf's bloody heath.
As famish'd vultures snuff and pant for blood,
So Murrough and the Danish champion stood ;
Their swords gleam'd dreadful o'er the dusky field,
And death, grim monarch, hover'd o'er each shield :
At every stroke their armour did resound,
And purple torrents pour along the ground ;
His ponderous axe aloft great Murrough threw,
And on the Dane's high crest the weapon flew ;
The brazen helmet burst with thundering sound,
And rolled afar on the ensanguin'd ground ;
The giant's skull was severed with the blow,
The spouting blood in purple currents flow,
Groaning he fell on Clontarf's bloody plain,
And soon was number'd with his fellows slain.
Sitrick Mac Lodair with a chosen band
Of hostile Danes, who bow'd to his command,
Like a strong torrent pour'd along the field,
And of the Irish many had to yield.
Mac Lodair in their front, provok'd the war,
His mighty falchion glittered from afar,
He scattered death throughout the Irish host,
And to the shades sent many a shrieking ghost ;
'To stop its course now Murrough quickly flew,
And from its sheath his mighty axe he drew,
High gleaming in the air aloft he flung
Its mighty head—Mac Lodair's armour rung :

Thro' his great body crush'd the weapon went,
And with one blow his bones and bowels rent—
Prone on the earth he falls, his soul takes flight,
And wings her way to shades of endless night.
From morning sun thus did the battle rage,
And blood and death did every soul engage ;
The scales of fate hung doubtful o'er the field,
“ And now the Danes and now the Irish yield.”
The sun declined apace toward the main,
The solid earth did groan with heaps of slain,
The Irish courage could not be subdued,
The work of death they gloriously pursued ;
From morning sun, till nearly four o'clock,
Tho' one to two, they stood the dreadful shock,
And now one glorious effort for to try,
In columns close upon the foe they fly :
As hungry wolves now prowling for their prey,
Unto the guarded fold do take their way,
The watchful mastiff, should he dare to stand,
His limbs they scatter o'er the fertile land ;
They scale the fold, the flocks they do devour—
Thus did the Irish on the Danish pour.
Their spears extended in a polished line,
Their glittering casques with burnish'd steel did shine;
No force on earth could stop their bold career—
'There lay a sever'd head—an arm here.
The clash of arms, the victor's dreadful cry ;
In heaps promiscuous Danes on Danes do die ;
In vain they raise their shields their lives to save,
The ponderous axe does hurl them to their grave ;
In vain they fly to shun the coming death,
The whizzing spear o'ertakes and stops their breath ;

Rivers of purple gore run o'er the plain,
 And flow in torrents to the western main—
 Their leaders gone—their brave battalions broke,
 And death or slavery sounds in every stroke;
 Before the Irish swords they fly afar,
 And dying groans do mix with shouts of war;
 Great Murrogh thundered o'er the bloody field,
 With dealing death his sword he could not wield ;*

* “His sword he could not wield.” Murrogh, at this time, through the uncommon use and exertion of his sword-arm, had both hand and arm so swelled and pained, as to be unable to lift them up. In this condition he was attacked, sword in hand, by Henry, a Danish Prince ; but Murrogh, closing in upon him, seized him with the left hand, shook him out of his coat of mail, and prostrating him, pierced his body with his sword, by fixing its pommel on his breast, and pressing the weight of his body on it. In this dying situation, he nevertheless seized the dagger which hung by Murrogh's side, and with it gave him at the same time, a mortal wound ! The Dane expired on the spot ; but the Irish Prince lived until next morning, when he died like a hero and a Christian.—*History of Ireland.*

The celebrated and liberal Dr. Warner gives a different account of the death of the brave and illustrious Murrogh :—

“The best blood the Irish paid for the glorious victory of Clontarf, was not in open battle, but by treachery ; for Murrogh, riding through the dead and wounded, after the flying enemy, was called to by one of the sons of the Danish King, who knew him, and who implored his help. The magnanimous Prince, whose mercy was not inferior to his courage, immediately dismounted ; and as he was lifting the Dane up, in order to give him succour, the perfidious monster stabbed him to the heart. Thus fell the valiant and victorious Murrogh, the eldest son of Brian, who had fought by his father's side, from the early age of 14, with equal glory and success.”

The victory of Clontarf was purchased at an immense sacrifice ; for on the altars of that battle were immolated a Monarch, who

His sinews swell'd, his sword now useless lies,
Yet lightning flashed with terror from his eyes ;
This Henry spied, a Danish Prince of fame,
He thought by Murrogh's death to raise his name ;
At the great hero's head he raised a blow,
Though thus disabled, no inglorious foe ;
The polish'd helm received the mighty stroke,
And thus the Irish chieftain to him spoke :
What tempts you thus on certain death to run,
If Denmark you would see, this arm shun,
Though useless now my blood-stained sword does lie,
Within my grasp you're certain for to die ;
Thus having said, he seized him by the hair
With his left hand, and poised him high in air ;
Out of his coat of mail he shook the Dane,
And threw him prostrate on the bloody plain ;
With his left hand he drew his well-tried sword,
And waved it gleaming o'er the Danish lord,
He clapped the pummel to his manly breast,
On Henry's heart the glittering point did rest ;
A passage through the crashing bones it found,
The wounded Dane in torment bites the ground.
Though wounded thus, and welt'ring in his gore,
He seized the dagger which great Murrogh wore,
He quickly plunged it in the hero's side,
And at the wound out flow'd a purple tide ;

might, with justice, be termed the last of the Heberian Kings, as well as his son, Murrogh, and his grandson, the gallant and youthful Turloch, several of his nephews, and many other illustrious Chiefs, whose fame Dr. Keating and Mr. O'Halloran have inscribed on the historic pillar of immortality.

Great Murrogh falls, his glittering arms resound ;
The purest blood in Erin stains the ground ;
Surrounded by his men the warrior lay,
Whose sword struck terror through the foe that day ;
Nor could the Danish host the hero scare,
He glittered foremost in the ranks of war ;
In peace a friend, both steady and sincere,
Lov'd by his friends, e'en foes did him revere.
His drooping men, now joining shield to shield,
Raise him thereon, and slowly quit the field ;
Confusion reigned throughout the Danish host,
Their leaders gone, their hope of plunder lost ;
Close at their heels the Irish swords are seen,
And sever'd legs and arms strew the green ;
The Danes in terror fly wide o'er the plain
To quit our Isle and ne'er return again.
An aid-de-camp of Brian's, O'Corcoran nam'd ;
Had mark'd the royal standard where it flam'd,
Now saw it struck, when gallant Murrogh fell,
The tent he enters the sad news to tell ;
Before a crucifix upon his knees,
The aged Monarch bent, O'Corcoran sees ;
To horse, he cries, my sire, and quit the plains,
For now we are surrounded by the Danes,
The battle's lost, I saw our standard ta'en,
O! fly and save your life nor here remain.
Do you, says Brian, from the Danish fly,
This field I sought to conquer or to die ;
My foes shall never boast I ran away,
Nor fell inglorious on this well fought day ;
This said, he drew his sword, it gleam'd afar,
His dear companion in the fields of war ;

Firm and unmov'd the hoary monarch stood,
Resolved in Erin's cause to spill his blood.
Brodar, the Dane, now with a chosen few,
Enters the tent and at the monarch flew.
The grey-hair'd champion on his guard does stand,
And pierced his heart amidst his Danish band ;
Two of his soldiers yielded up their breath
To Brian's sword, and met a glorious death ;
Thus, like a stag at bay, though bow'd with years,
Surrounded by his foes, the king appears,
He hurl'd his sword around which oft was tried,
At equal fight, he all the Danes defy'd.
At length a treacherous Dane behind him came,
By Brian's death to raise his grovelling name,
His vengeful sword in Brian's sacred side,
Transpierced he ran—out flow'd a purple tide ;
The Monarch reels—he falls—he gasps for breath,*
Erin ! he sigh'd—and closed his eyes in death.

* “ As though born always to share the same fate in war about the same moment that his brave son met with his ignoble death, the aged Monarch, father of his line, was basely slaughtered in his pavilion by some of the routed Danes, who seeing it unguarded, stopped long enough to butcher the helpless, hoary King, and too long to preserve themselves, being all of them cut to pieces. In this deplorable manner ended the glorious many days of BRIAN, King of Munster, and Monarch of all Ireland. He commanded in more engagements than Julius Cæsar ; distinguished himself in all of them with amazing intrepidity, and even fought up to the character of a hero in romance. In short, it may be said of Brian, that he was a prodigy of goodness, of understanding, and of greatness. To look at him through his piety, one would think he had spent his entire life in a cloister ; to examine the productions of his genius, we should be inclined to believe that his whole time had

The prince of Ulster now the tent drew near,
Brian's faithful ally and his friend so dear,
In quest of Brodar's party—alas ! too late
To save the mighty monarch from his fate ;
But when he spied the hero as he lay,
To grief his manly breast became a prey ;
Prone on the monarch's bosom he does fall
And cries—my friend, my monarch, and my all
Has thy great soul now wing'd her airy flight
To joys above, to never-ending night ;
Erin may weep, her champion is no more,
Again his equal ne'er will tread our shore ;
Since thou art gone no longer will I stay,
But join thy train in bright realms of day ;
The wounds which he in battle did receive
Now burst afresh, which did his soldiers grieve ;
Farewell, my friends he cried, revenge my death,
And by his monarch's side resign'd his breath !
Their souls aloft did soar, there to reside
Midst those who for their faith and country died.
Thus fell the immortal Brian, aged eighty-eight,
A warrior bold, likewise a statesman great ;
In times of peace was gentle as the dove,
His soul was tuned to harmony and love ;
But when his country's wrongs requir'd his aid,
The brazen front of war he calm survey'd ;
Twenty-nine battles on the ensanguined plains,
Great Brian led against the haughty Danes ;

“ been occupied in literature and the sciences ; and to view him as a general and a monarch, he appears to have studied nothing but the art of war and politics, the conquest of his enemies, and the ease and prosperity of his subjects.”—*Warner's History of Ireland.*

He rais'd this isle from slavery and disgrace
To be a glorious and a happy place ;
He lov'd his country, but his subjects more ;
He arts encourag'd round old Erin's shore ;
He to his foes was dreadful in the field,
But the oppress'd he'd from oppression shield ;
The laws enacted by him were rever'd,
And in his reign all robbers disappear'd ;
Learning and religion flourish'd in our isle,
Beneath his sway the rich and poor did smile ;
A christian, statesman, and a soldier great,
In council wise, and steady in debate ;
All virtues centered in his royal breast,
And his loved name by Irishmen is bless'd ;
When told the field was lost, the hero shone ;
Go thou, he cried, I face the foe alone ;
To die or conquer here I took the field
To no inglorious wounds does Brian yield ;
My foes shall never boast I fled with fear,
“ Let come what comes,” I stand and rally here.
There shone the man who for old Erin's good,
And for her freedom offered up his blood.
Read this, degenerate sons of such a sire ;
Read this and blush, and wonder, and admire ;
Such was great Brian, such his warriors bold,
They died all free, nor fawn'd for paltry gold ;
How glorious was their fate, how just the cause,
To die for Erin and her ancient laws !
Their souls immortal, soar'd to endless light,
Where tyrants never go to blast their sight ;
O ! Erin's sons, their virtue imitate,
For to be good is surely to be great.



CHARACTER OF BRIAN.

BY MR. O'HALLORAN.

THE following character of BRIAN is given by Mr. O'Halloran :—

“It was the custom in those days, when the Chief of a Clan fell in battle, to lower the standard belonging to his house, as each Chief had his own particular standard. Murrogh, being Brian's son, and Commander-in-chief, when he fell, the royal standard was struck ; and in the general deroute, unable to distinguish friend from foe, O'Corcoran concluded that the royal army was defeated ; he hastily entered the tent of Brian, who was on his knees before a crucifix, and requested he would immediately mount his horse and escape, for that all was lost.

“Then it was that the Hero and the Monarch blazed forth in their utmost lustre. “Do you,” says he, “and my other attendants fly ; it was to conquer or to die, that I came here, and my enemies shall not boast the killing me by inglorious wounds.” So saying, he seized his sword and battle-axe, his constant companions in war, and resolutely waited the event. In the general confusion, Brodar, the Dane, and a few followers, entered the Royal tent. Brodar was armed from head to foot, and yet the gallant old Chief,

pierced his body through his coat of mail ; two more of his attendants met the same fate, and Brian received his death by a fourth.

“Thus fell the immortal Brian in the eighty-eighth year of his age ; the most uniformly perfect character that History can produce. If we consider him in his military capacity, we should suppose that the study of arms superceded every other object. In twenty-five different rencontres, and twenty-nine pitched battles, did he engage his Danish and other enemies, and victory always attended his standard.

“He gave vigour and force to the laws, and the sons of rapine and plunder instantly disappeared. He re-established religion and letters, and was the first Irish Prince who laboured to reform and convert his Danish subjects. He was terrible to his enemies in the field ; he was mild and merciful in the cabinet : and during his whole reign, a single act of cruelty and injustice cannot be laid to his charge.

“In short, as a soldier, a statesman, a legislator, a christian, and a scholar, he had not a superior ; and if any thing can blazon his character higher, it must be his manner of dying : at the age of eighty-eight, when the vital forces sensibly decay—at a time when he was requested to retire to his tent from the horrors of the day ; under these circumstances he was told all was lost, and himself requested to flee. Then it was that the hero blazed forth, silvered over with age, surrounded by his enemies, he stood on his guard, and laid the Danish Chief, with two of his followers,

dead at his feet. This was closing the scene with true dignity. With him fell the vitals of the Irish Constitution, and likewise the power of the Danes in Ireland. This battle broke their power, and the survivors took an eternal farewell of Erin, after having maintained a footing in it for near two hundred years."

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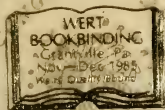
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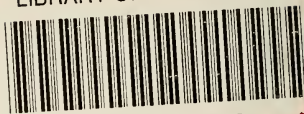
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